

A REPORT FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

March 10, 1954.

re: Massachusetts Rifle Association.

Dear Member:

I believe every member of the Massachusetts Rifle Association should be brought up to date regarding the business of the club transacted by the officers and the Board of Directors for the years 1951, '52, '53 and '54. At the annual meeting of 1951, I was elected President. The injunction then against the club had been in force approximately one year. We had dwindled to a small group of about thirty five members, but determined to carry on. I promised at that meeting that I would do everything possible to put the club back in business.

Your confidence and your cooperation has made it a pleasure to have acted in the capacity of president through these years. The members that have given so freely of their time, labor, materials and advice, and sometimes financial aid, are a credit to this organization and are to be complimented for the remarkable comeback that has been made. I will enumerate these tasks as follows: Lifting the injunction which was placed on the club and which prevented us from any outdoor shooting until an agreement was reached that we could use the small bore .22 calibre rifles on the outdoor range. Having no facilities for indoor shooting, some members erected a bullet trap upstairs and by cutting a hole through the wall in the club room, continued to do a little shooting during bad or cold weather, but very little activity went on during this period until the club councilor, George Thompson, with the help of a friend of mine, a lawyer by the name of Donald A. Welch, who is now an honorary member of the club, put their heads together and we were very fortunate in having the injunction lifted. Our legal fees at that time were \$1,000.00 and George made an agreement with Mr. Henchie whereby the club only had to pay \$500.00, but left us in the position that if we ever sold the land we would have to pay the other \$500.00. We all decided that unless we were forced to the wall and had to move that we would never sell and at one of the directors meetings after a long discussion, an offer that had been made verbally to purchase the entire property for \$25,000.00, was unanimously voted down and it was then decided that a value to sell would be placed on the property at \$65,000.00. This injunction taught us all a good lesson that we should never forget - "the safety factors at the firing points or at the target butts, should never be disregarded."

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After the injunction was cleared, we were then ready to go back into business. At first we needed a new culvert on the road coming in from Salem Street. This the club purchased and through one of our neighbors that was working on his land and having machinery available at that time, the trench was dug at no cost to the club and the culvert put in place. Next we needed a new building at the two hundred yard butts, the old building having rotted away and gone to such an extreme that it could not be repaired. We needed a barrier at the two hundred yard firing line, if only as a token means to show that we were safety-minded. We knew that we had to have some sort of indoor range, as we had none, and no money to work with. Repairs on the house had to be taken care of. The members got together and \$1,300.00 was raised by loans from the members at \$100.00 per note. This money and the revenue obtained from membership dues and rent from the house, range fees and other means of raising money, was put to the following use. The new target house at the two hundred yard range was completely rebuilt and is in perfect working condition for four targets, at a cost of roughly, \$500.00. The safety barrier at the two hundred yard firing line was a project that called for a little engineering and we finally came up with the present barrier at approximately \$800.00. The repairs to the house that were absolutely necessary, amounted to over \$900.00 in the last three years. The indoor range I know you are all proud of, as very few clubs in this vicinity have the facilities that we now enjoy.

A portion of the indoor range materials were obtained from the Boston club when they were forced to disband when they could not find another location. The labor, painting and some of the materials were donated through the generosity of the members. To further the safety factors for the outdoor range, we hired a bulldozer to push up the backstops at the two hundred yard line, at the one hundred yard line, the fifty yard line and also in back of the twenty five and fifty yard pistol lines. This cost us another \$300.00. The old trap house at the field that had been out of use for considerable time, was falling apart. The platform was all gone. A few members got together and furnished all of the labor and materials at no cost to the club. This house is now in exceptionally good condition.

The lighting facilities at the club were in dire need of repair. In the first place we did not have the right means of bringing the electricity in from Salem Street to the club house or the house. This would have been a major project and would have cost us \$635.00, had not one of the members, through his ability and knowledge of that kind of work had new lines and poles erected and for the first time we had the proper power with individual meters at the house and at the club house. It cost us nothing! A double line of lockers were installed in the room under the indoor range downstairs and lights were installed by one of our members. The tasks that these men have accomplished, the time, the worry, the expense that they put themselves to, are too numerous to mention. Painting on the outside of the club house was done by some of our good members. The proof of a good organization lies in the fact that no one could have done this alone without the help of the members, the Board of Directors and the officers of the club that I have worked with the last four years. These facilities are there for the members to use, and we know they are using them because we can notice the increase in the range fees. Also notice the difference in the amount of used brass that is in the boxes, - that in itself tells of the results accomplished.

This club was organized in 1875. It is the oldest, active rifle club in the United States. It was organized by a group of very capable men. The By-laws were written and approved by the members and in my estimation are as good, if not better, than the By-laws of many, many organizations. From 1951, after the injunction was lifted, I have been doing a lot of thinking as to the future of the club. What ways and means could be devised as a matter of eliminating the possibility of future injunctions? I sought advice from different engineers, lawyers, contractors and business men, in all capacities. I had been approached a number of times with respect to the club selling the rights to the gravel. Some of these men painted beautiful pictures of the revenue that would be derived from its sale. Some men wanted to know if the club would sell the entire property.

Route #128 going through and taking some of our land made this property more tasty to people with a desire to purchase. With gravel getting scarcer and scarcer around Greater Boston, makes the gravel on our land more desirable. What should be done? What should be considered? What kind of a project would be to the benefit of the club? As a means of eliminating undesirable propositions, I decided that anyone that spoke to me of purchasing the gravel must agree to these provisions before I would bring it to the attention of the Board of Directors or the members of the club, for their approval. They would have to agree in the first place, to furnish, at no cost to the club, an engineer's topographical plan with all grades as they now exist and a plan showing the ultimate results after the gravel was removed; secondly, a survey of all the property - together with a performance bond. After this plan were submitted to the club, the Board of Directors would then decide what gravel could be taken and where from; what gravel should remain in place and what trees could be taken. With respect to the disposition of the tree stumps, boulders and debris that is left after a job of this kind, they would have to be placed on top of the backstops at the different ranges. I had been unable to interest anyone in this kind of

a proposition. No one offered any kind of a proposal that, in my estimation, would be beneficial to the club, or with the idea that the club could always stay in business as an outdoor shooting organization.

My brother and I are in business together. We own a very valuable piece of property. From time to time we are asked if we will sell. We have always refused, and finally a representative of one of the larger corporations in this country came to us with this proposition. Could we build for them and rent to them on a long term lease basis, amortizing the building in sixteen to twenty years, the type of building they would specify? This was something new to us and we were interested.

We finally placed our problems with a reliable construction company, in regards to constructing the building and were finally able to propose to the corporation, something that they were interested in. Unfortunately at the time, business dropped off and they were forced to use facilities of their own in one of their nearby factories and therefore, for the time being, they would not be able to go ahead, but we were asked to hold this open for the future.

While going through this business, the thought came to my mind that if we could do this for ourselves, why couldn't someone do something in the same line for the club? I explored the possibilities and it can be done. It is also within our legal province to do this.

I think we have a proposition that is well worth looking into. It will be brought to your attention and for your vote as to whether the Board of Directors will be given authority to draw up an agreement.

An option would have to be worked out with the Board of Directors whereby for the rights to remove and sell the portions of gravel that are decided upon, the making of the survey at no cost to the club, and making of the engineer's plan and a performance bond, at no cost to the club, and the drawing up of a long term lease for the area in back of the two hundred yard backstop. This arrangement would be accompanied by a deposit of \$1,000.00 returnable if no agreement is reached, or when an agreement is reached. This option need not be a long drawn out affair. It should run from one year to two years with the option of renewal by either party. That is ample time to negotiate the proper terms.

There are strong reasons why we must consider this action as soon as possible to retain our freedom of action as a shooting club. At this time it appears that there is another movement afoot to either curtail our activities or force us out of this area. We will have to act, at this annual meeting, on an offer from a firm of lawyers in Boston, in which they offer to purchase from us at \$100.00 per acre, a strip of land adjacent to Route #128, one hundred feet wide, that they would use as an entrance and exit to the piece of property that they have just acquired title to from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Their property is adjacent to our own property on the river side and has no entrance or exit, and is of no use to the people who have purchased it without obtaining a right-of-way or purchasing land from us. I know that if we sell any portion of our land, that we are jeopardizing our own activities. For as soon as anyone owns any land that is in line with our firing positions, unless we can put up the most secure safety barriers, we will undoubtedly have another injunction on our hands and be forced out of business. Now, if this agreement for the gravel and a lease of the property that I have just mentioned can be brought to a head, or an option for the same could be consummated, we have an opportunity to head off this trouble.

These Boston lawyers would have to do their business through the holder of the option or the lease, and not with the club. If they have to do business with the lease holder or the option holder, they could be given a right-of-way to their property through

our property, by erecting or paying for the erection of the safety factors that are necessary. Under no conditions or consideration would the right-of-way entitle them to stop us from shooting. There would also be included in the lease that, in no way could anything be erected on the property to stop us from shooting.

The Mayor of Woburn has called me about this piece of land that these people want to purchase from us and he is interested that they have a right-of-way to their property because they intend to bring some manufacturing or industrial plant to this area that will bring additional taxes to the city of Woburn. It was also brought to my attention at the club one day, that the remark was passed that if we did not sell this piece of land to these people, we would have to give it up by right of eminent domain. That means that from now on we are going to be confronted with people wanting to purchase the land possibly to the extent of considering us as a nuisance and bringing it before the city fathers and bothering us to such an extent that we would have to go indoors and stop shooting outside altogether, or sell and get out and find another place. That is a tremendous project. To look for the land, to spend the time that is necessary, to raise the amount of money before you could complete your own sale, to move our facilities from where they are to where we would go, would be a task that I doubt if anyone in the club could do.

The constant encroachment of residential, industrial and other types of buildings now being erected so close to our property, is a warning to us to get our heads together and do something about our future now. This request to buy a piece of our property is only the beginning. If this is an example of where we now stand in this community, it is sure to happen that we will be forced to do something. If we do something of our own accord that will show the taxpayers of Woburn that we are civic-minded and want to stay in business, and at the same time do what we can to help bring revenue to their city, I can see a great future for our club, together with the possibility of putting to use some of our property, improving it and the facilities of the club at no direct cost, and also bringing to the club treasury some much need permanent revenue.

I respectfully request that a motion be made at this Annual Meeting that this report be written into the Secretary's records, and that the Board of Directors be authorized to look into these matters as soon as possible, and at a special meeting of the members, make their recommendations to the entire body, for their action.

Respectfully submitted,

Austin McHugh

Note: Please bring this letter to the meeting with you.

MASSACHUSETTS RIFLE ASSOCIATION
January 25, 1939.

The Annual Meeting of the Association was held at the Colonial Kitchen, 43 Charles street, Boston, this date. Dinner was at 7:00 p.m., after which the meeting was called to order by President A. P. Lambert. About twenty members and guests were present, including Lawrence Brewer, Secretary of the Middlesex County League of Sportsmen.

The minutes of the previous annual meeting were read, and, on motion of Dr. Bill, duly seconded, were approved.

The Treasurer read his report for the year. On motion of Dr. Bill, duly seconded, the report was accepted.

Mr. Dingley, chairman of the committee on electric lights, reported that the lights had been installed in the rangekeeper's house and in the clubhouse.

Mr. Gillard, chairman of the committee on telephone installation, stated that he really had nothing to do with the installation of the telephone, that someone else had made the application.

The Secretary read his report.

At the suggestion of the Chair, all present stood in silence for one minute as a token of respect for the late Colonel Duncan M. Stewart.

President Lambert thanked the members for their work and for their support, and stated that the installation of electric lights and telephone should enable us to get along with fifty members. He especially thanked Dr. Bill for the splendid work done in looking up some of the very valuable records of the Association, and requested Dr. Bill to tell the members something about his activities in that line.

Dr. Bill stated that he could not assume the entire credit for the work done, because many of the members had given of their time and material and suggestions. Dr. Bill then stated that in the course of refreshing the clubroom, some interesting things had been found; one was that the oil painting that was on the wall for so long, by an unknown artist, represented Dr. Mann, Dr. Baker, and George Niedner: their names were found on an old photograph. Also, one of the men in another old photograph that turned up in the course of refreshing the clubroom was Dr. Skinner, a black powder devotee of Minneapolis, taken about 1879. Dr. Bill then gave a sketch

of the history of the Minneapolis Rifle Club, which, around 1883, at the annual meeting of the Western Rifle Association, established a record which will long remain a record in Europe as well as in the United States. The Minneapolis club fired four telegraphic matches with the Massachusetts Rifle Association, winning the first, but losing the second, third, and fourth.

The greatest long-distance match participated in by the M.R.A. was with a club in Georgetown, British Guiana, in South America, around 1883. The British consul in Boston acted as umpire at Walnut Hill for the Georgetown team, and the United States consul at Georgetown acted as umpire at that place for the M.R.A. The scores were exchanged by cable/

Dr. Bill then gave a history of the oval targets found in one of the closets of the clubhouse and now fastened on the ceiling.

Dr. Bill spoke of his correspondence with Major Myles Merrill, and of Major Merrill's willingness to give to the Association some of his father's collection, - old cartridges, etc.

Dr. Bill then exhibited a strip of medals given to the Association as a permanent loan by Major General Charles C. Foster, a life member of the club. Dr/ Bill requested that a letter of thanks be dispatched to Major General Foster for his gift. He also suggested to Dr. Foster that the medals be put in circulation again, and suggested a "Foster Directors' Medal Match", thus putting the Directors' gold medal in circulation again, that it be awarded only for annual holding and be returned for the next year's competition, and that a permanent holding medal be given for the winner to keep. Dr. Bill stated that Dr. Foster was an adept at long distance work, and fired at Creedmoor, winning one of the medals, the Hilton Off-Hand Match, as well as firing on the winning team, defeating the regular Army, Navy, and other teams. He suggested a 500-yard off-hand match, and that the shield medal at the bottom of the strip could be used for it.

Dr. Bill then spoke of the Victory Medal, which had probably not been used for some time, established around 1879, and stated that he had found a reference to the medals and to the fact that the figure on it was copied from a statue of Victory in Ragensburg, Bavaria, erected by Ludovic The First of Bavaria around the early 80's, and a copy was made from a print in the Germanic Museum. The medal has a value of \$55.

Dr. Bill then went on to speak of the radio matches and the plans for radio matches of an increased range the coming year.

On motion of Dr. Bill, duly seconded, it was voted that the secretary write a letter of thanks to Dr. Foster for the gift of his personal medals covering the period from 1886 to date, and that he assure Dr. Foster that it is the sense of the meet-

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ing that some of these medals will be put to use and will carry his name with them.

Dr. Bill spoke further of the pseudonyms or 'shooting names' of the shooters of those days.

Dr. Bill's talk, of which the above is an outline, was very interesting, and at its close he was heartily applauded.

The Chair then called on Mr. Larry Brewer, Secretary of the Middlesex County League of Sportsmen's Clubs.

Mr. Brewer spoke briefly of his experience in the Small Arms School at Camp Perry in 1901, and matters relating to the League.

Mr. Gillard, chairman of the nominating committee, then read the committee's suggestions for the Board of Directors, Treasurer, Secretary, Range Master and Counsel for 1939.

On motion of Mr. Gillard, duly seconded, the Secretary was directed to cast one ballot for the election of those suggested by the committee, and the following were declared elected for 1939:

Vice-Presidents: Dr J. P. Bill and Richard I Dwyer.
Treasurer: Harold W. Morrill.
Secretary: J. P. Drumgoole.
Range Master: E. M. Kidder.
Counsel: George E. Thompson.

Directors:

F. S. Beckford	N. W. Filson	A. P. Lambert
Dr. J. P. Bill	W. S. Gibbons	C. A. Moore
Dr. H. R. Brunton	G. G. Gillard	H. L. Phillips
H. F. Dingley	C. D. Horrigan	G. E. Thompson
R. I. Dwyer	E. M. Kidder	F. E. Whipple

On motion of Mr. Gillard, duly seconded, the newly elected Directors were called into session.

The Directors reported that, on motion of Mr. Gillard, duly seconded, Mr. A. P. Lambert was elected president of the Association for 1939, by vote of the Directors.

Mr. Gillard spoke of President Lambert's work for the club during the past few years, under very adverse conditions, and of the results accomplished, and bespoke the support of the members for his plans for the coming year.

President Lambert thanked the members for the honor conferred on him, and hoped that he would continue to deserve their good opinion. He then spoke of needed repairs to the dwelling house, due to the falling off of shingles, and appointed G. G. Gillard, N. W. Filson, and R. I. Dwyer a committee on repairs to the Association's buildings.

President stated that whereas all of our rangekeepers in the past have been special policemen, such an appointment had been denied the present rangekeeper, Philip N. Gallagher by a representative of the Chief of Police of Woburn; he thereupon appointed R. I. Dwyer and G. G. Gillard a committee to interview the chief and find out the reason for the refusal. President Lambert stated that, with the approval of the Directors, he would designate Mr. Gallagher as Assistant Range Master.

On motion of Mr. Gillard, duly seconded, it was voted that Mr. Gallagher be appointed Assistant Range Master, in charge of equipment and property of the Association at Walnut Hill, Woburn.

The Chair then announced the following appointments:

Assistant Range Master: F. E. Whipple.

Range Committee:

C. A. Moore (small bore)	G. E. Thompson
Dr. J. P. Bill do.	F. E. Whipple
W. S. Gibbons (big bore)	E. M. Kidder

Statistical Officer (to keep record of matches fired) and Historian; Director of Publicity: Dr. J. P. Bill.

On motion of Mr. Gillard, duly seconded, it was voted to authorize Dr. Bill to incur the necessary expense to publish the history of the Massachusetts Rifle Association, and that the necessary expense for such service be subject to the approval of the Board of Directors.

The Chair suggested that Mr. Gallagher be authorized to collect range fees from members visiting the range on week days.

On motion of Dr. Bill, duly seconded, it was voted to allow Mr. Gallagher to collect range fees from members and their guests visiting the range during the week.

The Chair suggested that Dr. Brunton be made an Honorary Member in recognition of his support of the club in the past. On motion of Mr. Dwyer, duly seconded, it was voted to give Dr. Herbert R. Brunton a life membership in the Association, free of all incumbrances, to shoot when he wished.

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Mr. Gillard then spoke at length of the Massachusetts Fire Legislative Association, explaining what it stands for, and giving an outline of its work and accomplishments.

Mr. Brewer stated that if the Fire Arms Association would furnish him with information of just what the organization is doing, he would mail it out to every club in the state.

The Chair directed Francis Burke, Secretary of the Fire Arms Association, to see that Mr. Brewer gets the information he desires.

Mr. Brewer stated that all information mailed before the last Thursday of the month would be sent out promptly. In response to Mr. Gillard's explanation of the necessity of getting information to the various clubs on short notice, Mr. Brewer stated, "If you will call me at 2:00 o'clock today, I can have that information in the mail tomorrow morning".

The Chair expressed the thanks of the organization to the Secretary of the Middlesex League, and stated that his assistance would be of great value to the Fire Arms Association.

At the suggestion of Mr. Morrill, the Chair then appointed as delegates to the Middlesex County League of Sportsmen's Clubs, Messrs. H. W. Morrill, G. E. Thompson, with W. S. Gibbons and G. G. Gillard as alternates.

Upon inquiry by the Chair as to how the last committee functioned, Mr. Brewer stated that the committee functioned very well, especially Mr. Morrill, who did a lot of work with him.

The Chair then appointed the following delegates:

To the Eastern Massachusetts Rifle League:
Dr. J.P. Bill - W. S. Gibbons.

To the Massachusetts Pistol League:
R. I. Dwyer.

On motion of Mr. Dwyer, duly seconded, it was voted to re-affiliate with the Bay State Rifle and Pistol Association for 1939; affiliation fee, \$2.00.

The matter of being host to the New England Police Revolver League for the coming year was discussed. After some discussion as to the proper sum to charge the League, the Chair appointed Messrs. Dwyer and Morrill to contact the League and have a date set if they want to use the range, and suggested a charge of \$75 and the services of a couple of boys.

The Chair thanked Mr. Phillips for the fine photographs he took of the pistol shooters.

Dr. Bill then proposed a 'Foster Gold Medal Match', military

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off-hand, at 500 yards, B targetm two sighters and twenty shots for record, for Directors or Honorary Directors, the medal to be held one year, and a permanent token for the winner. After some discussion as to the desirability of such a long-range off-hand match, the Chair called for a show of hands, and declared the sense of the meeting to be in favor of the match.

There was some discussion of a Directors' match at 200 yards off-hand, iron sights, on the German ring target.

Mr. Gillard moved that the off-hand position be considered to mean with the shooter standing on his feet, not leaning against anything, and holding his arms as he chooses. The motion was duly seconded. The Chair refused to entertain the motion. After some discussion as to the meaning of 'off-hand', the Chair appointed as a committee to define off-hand shooting, Dr. Bill, R. J. Thanisch, and H. F. Dingley.

Mr. Filson suggested a turkey shoot for Thanksgiving.

The Chair announced that he would represent the Association as a delegate to the Bay State Rifle and Pistol Association.

On motion of Mr. Dwyer, duly seconded, it was voted that the Secretary write to Dr. Foster and inform him of the proposed Foster Directors' Medal Match, details and conditions to be arranged later.

The meeting then, at 10:40 p.m., adjourned.

*J. P. Dunnington,
Secy.*

The Annual Meeting and Dinner of the
Mass. Rifle Assoc. was held on Wednesday
evening, Jan 23 1935 at the Hotel Mayne Boston
at 6 P.M.

There were 15 members and two guests present:
Mason. Mayo. Nutting. Lill. Krumholz. Keaton
Mally. Curtis. Moore. Hunt. Burdick. Brewster
Bishop. Smith. Whipple. members and
Mason. Murphy. Barker and Parrella.

After dinner and a short entertainment of
music by the talent from the Old Fashion Cafe.

The business meeting was held.

The President's report was read and accepted.

The Treasurer's report showing a deficit of 23.00 for 1934
was accepted and accepted.

The Range Officer was read and accepted.

Mr. Burdick some remarks on an old member.

Prof. Geo. L. Hemen, who had died the previous
month. It was moved, seconded and voted that

that a standing vote of respect be ~~to~~ ^{for} Hemen
by all present.

It was moved and seconded and voted that

the application for membership of Mr.

Arthur S. Parrella present as agent be accepted.

A number of suggestions such as removal of
the range wafers, were made but that
one for each of fairs etc.

The report of the nominations committee was made
and ballots were sent for the election of officers
which resulted as follows.

after the election of officers the
Birn President Mr. Perkins called a meeting
of directors who voted to elect Mr.
W. S. Gibson as President.

By this time the snow was getting deep
and it was voted to adjourn and wait
for snow.

Some snow Nov. 22nd